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THE LITERARY ACTIVITY OF THE EMPEROR MAXIMILIAN I.

It is not so rare as one might suppose for great rulers to try their hands at literature, and Julius Caesar and Marcus Aurelius wrote books which rank them among the masters. If Maximilian I., Emperor of Germany from 1494-1517, failed to write anything comparable to the Commentaries on the Gallic War, it was not for lack of trying. During all the latter part of his life he was busied with plans for writing or collating. The list of proposed subjects finally grew to over a hundred and ranged from a treatise on cooking to a collection of prayers. But it is very doubtful whether he ever took much interest in any subject simply to produce a beautiful, an interesting or a useful book. He did not write from the love of letters.

Maximilian was firmly convinced that he could do almost everything better than anybody alive, better than all but a few of those who were dead. And a severe analysis of his books shows in them all the same leading motive—bragging. He brags of what has come to him by birth and what he has achieved; of what he owns and what he has done; of what he is and what his children will become. He brags of his great skill in cooking and of his piety; of his dancing and his generalship; of his knowledge of horses and pictures; of the marriages of his children and of the waters he preserves for fishing; of his ability to talk many languages and hunt all kinds of game; of the antiquity of his family and of his skill in blacksmithing; of his kindness to the poor and of his slaughter of enemies; of his mercy and of his executions of rebel peasants; of his ability to endure fatigue and his regularity in saying his prayers. Every book in which he took any interest is either a record of his deeds, a catalogue of his possessions or an exhortation to his descendants to base their greatness on his example. His prayer-book seems an exception. But its latest commentator believes it was designed to promote a pious enterprise of which Maximilian, as head of Christendom, was to be the glorious leader.

The works on genealogy and history are not even apparent exceptions to this inspiration of vanity. Maximilian's plan for his own tomb symbolizes his view of genealogy and history. As he saw it in his mind's eye, forty life-sized figures surrounded it.

They represented Maximilian's ancestors. A hundred small statues of saints of the house of Hapsburg kept their respectful watch over a sarcophagus adorned with twenty-four reliefs of the supreme achievements of Maximilian's life. Over it all, dominating history, genealogy, his own achievements, towered a colossal statue of Maximilian himself.

It is difficult to find a finer example of the desire for the extension of the *ego*, than is shown by Maximilian's work in literature and patronage of art. This egotism is not indeed too crassly expressed. Maximilian knew that it was not wise to put the trumpet of his praise too openly to his own lips. Neither is it concealed with art, as that clever man of the world, Julius Caesar, buried his commendation of his own generalship beneath an impersonal manner. At times it is naïve and childlike. At times the reader notes it indirectly, as one sees the polite struggle of a very vain man to take active interest in talking about anything except his own successes. But open or veiled, it is omnipresent as sunlight on an April day. And the man who survives the reading of all Maximilian's books in succession, receives at least one clear and distinct impression—of continuous, all-pervading vanity.

Vanity, unlike pride, is a weakness rather than a vice. It is not incompatible with amiability, and Maximilian was a most amiable man. It often accompanies capacity, and perhaps literary capacity more often than any other form of capacity; witness for instance the stolid vanity of Wordsworth, the touchy vanity of Pope. But Maximilian had no literary capacity, only a tireless energy in planning, correcting, inspiring the work of secretaries, scholars and illustrators. This judgment is, of course, a matter of taste. The reader who recalls the vague praises of Maximilian's literary ability and artistic knowledge which abound in German popular histories will question it. But if he reads Maximilian's books through, the question will be given up. Even without that severe cure, it is sufficient to notice that the praises are all vague and for his literary activity as a whole. None of the men who in modern times have made special studies of his separate works has anything to say in praise either of the form or the content of the particular object of his study.¹

Nevertheless, though these books are dull in themselves, they have an overtone of interest. The writer of the only essay in English about any of them had apparently not seen the latest

¹ For *Teuerdank*, see judgments of Haltaus, *Einleitung*, pp. 106, 108, 109; of Goedeke, *Einleitung*, xii, xxi, xxii; of Laschitzer. For *Weiss Kunig* see Alwin Schultz, *Jahrbücher der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen*, etc., Vol. VI.

edition of the books he wrote about and the conclusions of the only men who have thoroughly studied manuscripts of them, but the title of his essay is very suggestive, "Tewrdanck and Weiss Kunig and their Historical Interest."¹

The literary work of Maximilian throws light upon a strange personality who played a prominent part upon the stage of history. It does not show Maximilian as the man he thought he was, but it is none the less illuminating for that.

His preparation for literary work was not a very good one. He wrote in his autobiography, of his own childhood, "Although the King was very young he grew so in good habits that he surpassed all other princes and noblemen's children so that everybody wondered at his youth, and the old White King (his father) rejoiced at it, as may well be imagined." But, unfortunately, this summary of an old man writing an account of his life for an example to his grandchildren, does not agree with the indignation he expressed in his manhood against the tutor who had allowed him to grow up in ignorance. Neither does it agree with his father's recollection of the boy's education. For when Maximilian at the age of twenty-seven was crowned King of the Romans at Frankfort, his father expressed the greatest astonishment at the fact that he could make a speech to the magnates in Latin, "For certainly," he said, "at the age of twelve years I was afraid he would turn out either mute or a fool."

When he came to the Netherlands at eighteen as husband of the Duchess, the French statesman, Commynes, thought him very badly educated. He did not remain so. Maximilian had a vast fund of nervous energy always seeking outlets. He never wasted time, and even his amusements were strenuous. He laid aside campaigning or left the labors of the council-chamber only for a hard hunting-trip or a whirl of banquets, masks and balls. When he once discovered the pleasures of the mind and tastes he flung himself into them with the same restless ardor he showed on all sides of life. He surrounded himself with scholars, employed artists, and gave himself the best education he could pick up in the intervals of life by reading, study and conversation. This love of learning, letters and art became, like everything else in him, tributary to his dominant passion, a ceaseless greed for distinction. But it grew from a nobler root. It arose out of a sense of pleasure in the exercise of the mind; just as his lifelong passion for hunting grew out of the

¹ A. W. Ward, in *An English Miscellany presented to Dr. Furnivall*, Oxford, 1901.

habit of finding pleasure in the exercise of skill and strength in following the chamois to the cliffs or the wild boar to the swamps.

It was natural for an active-minded man who ruled many territories to gain some knowledge of a number of languages. His autobiography says that he could dictate to secretaries in several languages at the same time, and talk to the captains of his army in seven. One of his biographers says that he could speak Italian, French and Latin elegantly. We cannot test this account of his Italian, but it is to be hoped that he spoke French better than he wrote it in those letters to his daughter Margaret which have been preserved. We know this was not the case with his Latin, for a distinguished preacher of his day has left an account of a visit to Maximilian in which he says, "*Latinus bonus sed scripto melius quam verbo*". In that case his spoken Latin must have been very poor.

Every patron who dabbles in art, scholarship or letters becomes a shining mark for flattery. But the praise of Maecenas is not all conscious flattery. The modern critic often finds it hard to maintain a just severity toward the verses, the picture or the statue turned out in the spare hours of the talented amateur who happens to be a charming woman of high social position. The amiable manners of the man who held the highest secular title in the society of Europe of the early sixteenth century produced the same effect. A curious chance has preserved to us from Maximilian's life a classical example of this familiar hypnotic influence of social position in paralyzing critical perceptions.

Willibald Pirkheimer, a cultivated patrician of Nuremberg, served as commander of his city's contingent in the Swiss war. In the year 1499 he crossed the lake of Constance with Maximilian, and years afterward described to Melancthon the voyage. Maximilian spent part of it dictating in Latin some paragraphs of his autobiography. In the evening he gave Pirkheimer the day's dictation and asked him his opinion of the "soldier's Latin". Pirkheimer assured Melancthon that no German historian had ever written in so pure a style as these dictations, for which since the Emperor's death he had vainly searched. Recently some fragments of this autobiography have been found, and on one of the sheets the scribe has written, "King Maximilian wrote this while we were sailing to Lindau on the Lake of Constance". It is therefore the very passage on which Pirkheimer afterwards based his judgment to Melancthon that no German historian had written purer Latin. The editor of the manuscript diplomatically "leaves it to the reader to decide whether the Latinity of the Emperor, the style of his dic-

tation, really deserves the praise of Pirkheimer". Other writers are less reserved. "A more miserable kitchen Latin could scarcely be imagined". Certainly every part of Pirkheimer's own book *De Bello Helvetico* would pass muster as a school-exercise in elementary Latin style with far less criticism than these paragraphs which he told Melancthon were unsurpassed by any German historian. His own language Maximilian never learned to write with great clearness or any freedom.

Maximilian's book-making activity may be most easily described in short space under three heads:

I. Books for which the reader has the right to hold him personally responsible.

II. Books whose manuscripts he criticized and supervised.

III. The expression of his ideas in illustrations and sets of wood-cuts.

Maximilian seems to have written only one book without any help, the *Geheimes Jagdbuch*.¹ The manuscript, which contains only twenty-five hundred words, is entirely in his own hand. The Emperor wrote it to teach his two grandchildren, Carl and Ferdinand, the art of hunting. The glamor of an amiable personality in a high position, which affected those who knew Maximilian, is not yet exhausted. The editor speaks of "the fresh air of the woods that breathes from its lines—the reflective sense for nature that takes us captive". But as a matter of fact, it would be difficult to write twenty-five hundred words, chiefly about chamois-hunting in Tyrol, drier and less captivating. Nearly a quarter of the *Jagdbuch* is occupied by a list of hunting preserves and houses. Four-fifths of the rest is filled with minute directions about dress, food and conduct while hunting. Of these miscellaneous directions some are useless, some the boys would have learned by common sense, most of the remainder any of the huntsmen would have shown them in one trip. They are told nothing of value about the habits of the game. There is an absence of any sense of the beauty of nature. This is the more remarkable, for, in an age when mountain-climbing was not fashionable, Maximilian tells us that he had been on the top of the highest mountain in Europe,—he meant either the Gross Glockner or the Gross Venediger. Maximilian may have been like those modern Alpinists who think of their record and never of the view. More probably he lacked, not the feeling for natural beauty shown in the French hunting treatises of his contemporaries, but the power to express it.

¹ Beautifully printed by Thomas von Karajan, 1859, second edition, together with a modern German translation.

The disappointed reader rouses when the writer announces that he will close his book with some wonderful true hunting stories. But they are not very interesting. "The Great Huntsman killed a hundred ducks with a hundred and four shots". He saw a "chamois taken in a fish net; a stag in a house; a wild boar in a mill-wheel". He mixes with such sentences riddles of this sort: "The Great Huntsman arrived on the top of the greatest mountain of Europe without touching the globe or the mountain". The answer probably is, he walked over the snow. All the recorded specimens of Maximilian's wit are of this exceedingly simple and almost childish type.

Three things in this dull performance are interesting. First, his naïve self-glorification. He speaks of himself as the Great Huntsman. And once when he had written Kaiser Maximilian he struck it out and wrote the Great Huntsman. His dreams for the greatness of his house show in the phrase by which he calls the future head of the Hapsburgs, "Thou King of Austria". The title was then "Duke of Austria". One single paragraph shows a touch of that sympathetic tact in personal intercourse which was Maximilian's rarest quality. It suggests the best reason why a gentleman should cherish the survival of primitive instinct in the love of hunting and fishing—to keep him in touch with simple men and the fundamental needs of life. "Thou King of Austria shalt always rejoice in the great pleasures of woodcraft for thy health and refreshing and the comfort of thy subjects . . . because they have access to you, and while hunting you can help the petitions of the poor, for the common man will come closer to you . . . in the hunting field than in houses".

Before the year 1888 the list of extant books of the first class was supposed to begin and end with the title of this little treatise. The two great autobiographical works, *Teuerdank* and *Weiss Kunig*, were thought to be the work of the imperial secretaries, carrying out general suggestions of Maximilian. A more careful study of the manuscript has dispelled this false impression. As a result of his examination of the four different codices containing drafts of *Teuerdank*, Mr. Simon Laschitzer concludes, "The Emperor himself was the chief redactor of the poem. He himself gave the contents of each separate chapter; and not only those in which his different adventures are told, but also those which simply adorn the poem with mystic or didactic passages. . . . It is certain that without his consent no verse of the poem and no illustration was sent to the printer. And finally he settled the order of the separate chapters"

Teuerdank was printed in 1517, and was the only one of Maximilian's works to reach the public during his life. It was begun more than twelve years before, and at least three men helped to put Maximilian's ideas into halting verses, which he criticized, changed and combined. In 1517 the Germans had not yet achieved a national language. Even men of position used dialects in their letters. *Teuerdank* is written in the court language in which Martin Luther found the starting-point for the national language he formed for his translation of the Bible. Hence, one of the editors of *Teuerdank* has written that there is "no work of the age before Luther so easy for a modern German to read". It is doubtful whether anybody finds it easy to read this labored allegorical poem describing the mythical adventures of Teuerdank (Maximilian) on his journey to marry his first wife, Mary of Burgundy. Three treacherous characters, Badluck, Rashness and Envy, plot to destroy him. In succession they meet Maximilian and tempt him into a variety of dangerous positions from which by courage, wisdom and skill he escapes. From a moral point of view this is admirable enough, but the allegory halts. Its standing difficulty is the incredible obtuseness of the hero. It took Teuerdank fifty unfortunate adventures to find out that Badluck was a treacherous counsellor. Surely for a cool and clever hero that was a little slow. At the end Teuerdank reaches his bride and the three scoundrels are put to death.

The carrying out of this plan is monotonous. Envy plunges Teuerdank into two kinds of dangers: of war and of the tilt-yard. There are thirty of these. Badluck and Rashness lead him into dangers of travel, of hunting, and the handling of weapons, varied by two illnesses. There are sixty-three of these, and we are told with unvarying monotony the most various adventures: how the hero did not break through the ice—how powder did not explode when he was duck-shooting in a boat full of it—how water saved his life on a number of occasions because he did not get drowned in it—how he went into a cage of lions—how stones did not fall on him—how the doctors did not kill him because he prescribed for himself—how an avalanche missed him—how he killed a number of animals and how a number of men failed to kill him. The probability is that most of these things really happened or failed to happen. In talking of some of them he must have been interesting. But the poem uses just as many and just as dull sentences in telling how Teuerdank did not step on a rotten beam in an old tower, as in describing his single-handed killing of a boar at bay in a tangled swamp. All the adventures sound very much alike. The most successful literary effort of the poem is the search for laudatory

epithets to link with the name of the hero; the net result is fifteen.

But in its day the book was popular. It was twice printed during the life of the author, each time in two editions. Eighteen years later it was again issued and before the sixteenth century closed it was modernized, appearing in four editions. A hundred years later, in 1679, it was again modernized and printed in two editions. This popularity was doubtless due partly to the affectionate interest which gathered around the legendary figure of Maximilian as a typical Kaiser of the German folk, and partly to the splendid wood-cuts his care provided for the book.

The second of Maximilian's greater literary works is the *Weiss Kunig*, first printed more than a hundred and fifty years after his death. It was long regarded as to a great extent the production of a certain Marx Treizsaurwein, one of his secretaries. Mr. Alwin Schultz, the editor of the final edition of it, says: "What we have of the *Weiss Kunig* is, with the possible exception of the first and second part, unquestionably the personal work of Maximilian himself. Nevertheless, Maximilian permitted his private secretary to dedicate the manuscript to the King of Spain and to his two grandchildren and so to appear, in a way, as the author; just as Melchior Pfinzing had done with *Teuerdank*."

Weiss Kunig is an unfinished autobiography in three parts. The last and longest part relates to the achievements of the hero in diplomacy and war. Treizsaurwein tells in a final note that he ordered the dictations of the Emperor, and the internal evidence supports the assertion. The names of the chief personages are concealed. For example, the Fish King means the Doge of Venice; the Blue King, the King of France; the King with Three Crowns, the Pope; the Old White King, Maximilian's father; the Young White King, Maximilian himself. But beyond this disguise the book purports to be history and not allegory. It is really historical romance. The object of the writer was, as Treizsaurwein explains in the dedication, to present to his grandsons, that they might follow in his footsteps, the example of a king ruling in the fear of God. The last editor, writing under the shadow of the throne of Maximilian's descendant, diplomatically remarks: "How far in his relations the imperial poet presents the facts in a light favorable to himself, historians will perhaps measure". It does not need a very careful measure. The *Weiss Kunig* is as bad history as it is literature. In a style clumsy and monotonous, it shows us Maximilian not as he was but as he wanted to appear to posterity. That this treatment of history to his own advantage was more naïve self-consciousness than intentional distortion, is quite possible. His

attitude in the case of his *Genealogy* suggests this explanation of the suppressions and distortions of the *Weiss Kunig*.

The *Genealogy* was only a part of a cyclis of works he ordered written to display the history of his family. A number of men were engaged in making studies for it, and the Emperor gave a roving commission to search all the convent libraries for material. The researches finally took shape in a great work in five books by Dr. Jacob Mennel, entitled *Die fürstliche Chronik Kaiser Maximilian's genannt Geburtspiegel*.

It opened with a chronicle showing how the Franks were descended through the Romans from Hector of Troy, which prepared the way for showing Maximilian's descent from Priam. It contained also the legends of one hundred and seventy canonized saints, all of whom are in some way connected with the genealogical tables of Maximilian's family, which, with descriptions of their coats-of-arms, complete the volume. But the Emperor, either from his own studies or the suggestions of rival scholars, demanded proofs of the correctness of this genealogical tree. Especially he asked proof of the descent of his ancestor Clovis from Hector of Troy. Mennel referred the Emperor to information he had received from a certain abbot, Trithemius of Sponheim. Trithemius informed the Emperor that a certain Hunibald had written in the time of Clovis an account of the origin of the Franks and their migration from Troy to Germany. He had made extracts from that work, but the manuscript itself he had left in Sponheim eight years ago. His successor as abbot had sold a lot of works to the abbot of Hirschau. The libraries of the two monasteries were carefully searched, but no chronicle of Hunibald could be found. Then Trithemius printed a work on the origin of the Franks from his own pen, with a number of extracts from the lost Hunibald, and Dr. Mennel based on it a new line of descent for Maximilian. A certain learned Dr. Stabius was then asked by the Emperor to decide which was the better genealogy. His report concluded that neither was reliable. It pointed out that the first filled an interval of two hundred and nine years between two historical persons by one name, Amprintas, and suggested that Amprintas must have been rather old when he died. It showed that the second rested on the word of Trithemius about a vanished manuscript. Trithemius had made too many mistakes where his statements could be corrected by authority to entitle him to credit where they could not. Stabius finished by making very pointed remarks about Trithemius's character. He even took the pains to provide his manuscript with a caricature of the abbot as a three-headed monster in a monk's gown. He followed this attack

by another writing saying that there never had been a Hunibald except in Trithemius's imagination. This seems to have been true. When, after Trithemius's death, the Emperor sent Stabius to look for the Hunibald manuscript, he found among the abbot's papers the alleged extracts, altered and rewritten in several different forms.

Mennel now gave up both his old genealogies, but found a new one, landing Maximilian's ancestral line safely once more with Hector of Troy. In 1518 Maximilian and his council of scholars accepted this as correct.

But the history-loving Emperor was not satisfied that he had gotten to the bottom of things, so during his stay in Augsburg he occupied his time with Mennel in historical researches to trace his line back to Noah. This was a little too much for Kunz von der Rosen, a nobleman in the imperial household—part friend and part jester—who had earned great license by risking his life to save Maximilian from the hands of his rebellious Netherland subjects.¹ He called from the streets two disreputable characters, a man and a woman, and took them into the room where Maximilian and Mennel were pursuing their studies. They begged pensions from Maximilian because they were his kinsfolk, being descendants of Abraham. He gave them a couple of coins, and when they persisted, ordered them out. Kunz commenced to laugh and then Maximilian began to see the meaning of the parable. "Dear Kaiser, and thou Mennel", said Kunz, "aren't you a pair of fools? It isn't possible to trace out for the Emperor a long genealogy without finding for him a great many disreputable relatives".²

The Emperor's sense of humor always seems to have been in abeyance where his own person or his family were concerned, and he could not see the sense behind this folly. It is doubtful whether Mennel was so obtuse.

But being on Biblical ground with his family history the Emperor was afraid of blundering into heresy without intending it. He appealed therefore to the theological faculty of the University of Vienna he had done so much to raise to a commanding position. He asked them for an opinion on his line of descent from Noah to Sicamber, the grandson of Hector. The faculty appointed a com-

¹ This rests on tradition, but on good tradition. Maximilian's affection for Kunz and the great license he allowed him are established by other anecdotes besides the one here given.

² Quoted in *Deutscher Kunstblatt*, Vol. V., by E. Harzen, from the manuscript of Fugger's *Ehrensiegel des Hauses Oesterreich*. The printed copy of this work, more often quoted popularly than any other source on Maximilian, ought not to be used without great caution. Ranke has shown that it is largely interpolated and untrustworthy.

mittee to examine the question. Their report, which still exists, is a very discreet document. On some steps of descent it makes no comment whatever. To other names it appends a list of passages from authors referring to them. To some it puts an interrogation mark (*in ambiguo est*). In regard to Sicamber, it appends a judicious note which is quite a model in the difficult art of steering between falsehood and offense. "Quis autem fuit is Siccambrus quem Turnus genuerit nihil quod afferamus habemus certi." What the Emperor would have done with this report, we cannot say, for he died a month after he asked for it. But in the *Weiss Kunig* Noah appears as his direct ancestor, a fact, it goes on to say, "which had been forgotten and the old writings neglected and lost until by sending learned men without regard to cost to search in all cloisters for books and to ask all scholars, the *Weiss Kunig* had proved it from one father to another (step by step)".

The story of his patronage of genealogy is characteristic enough of his attitude toward history; and this in an age when Reuchlin and Erasmus, Machiavelli, Guicciardini and Thomas More were all living!

Under this head of books which Maximilian caused to be made should be included his *Zeugbücher*, or accounts of the contents of his arsenals, contained in some six hundred and seventy pages of three manuscript volumes. Maximilian took pains to revise and make suggestions about the preparation of these catalogues, which are provided with rhymed verses. The verses and the arrangement often point out the improvements in material of war, notably in cannon, made by Maximilian.

The third branch of his book-making activity was the oversight of illustrations and planning sets of wood-cuts. Every one of his books was illustrated, and the Emperor took the greatest pains about the wood-cuts, inspecting rough sketches, suggesting alterations, rejecting entire plates.

Every leaf of the *Zeugbücher* has a picture. The *Fischereibuch*, a list of his fishing preserves, has five pictures; the *Jagdbuch*, a catalogue of his hunting preserves, has eight. On every page of the Prayer-Book the genius of Albrecht Dürer has surrounded petitions breathing the spirit of the monk and the crusader with a wealth of marginal ornament filled with the joy of life and beauty as it woke again in the Renaissance. *Teuerdank* has over a hundred illustrations. *Weiss Kunig* has about two hundred and fifty, the *Saints of the House of Hapsburg* more than a hundred, the *genealogy*, seventy odd.

But the activity of Maximilian in giving expression to his ideas

in pictures was not limited to these illustrations of a text. His object in pursuing literature and patronizing art was fame. He has given it words in the *Weiss Kunig*. A lord once blamed him because the money he spent "for remembrance" was lost. The *Weiss Kunig* answered, "Who does not make for himself in his life remembrance, he has after his death no remembrance and is forgotten with the toll of the bell. And therefore the gold I spend for remembrance is not lost, but the gold I save in the matter of memorials is a lessening of my future remembrance. And what I do not finish for my remembrance in my lifetime will not be made up for, either by thee or anyone else".

The great tomb that he planned was one of his means to secure remembrance. His written works were another. But in the art of engraving on wood, then flourishing in Germany, he saw a means of keeping his "remembrance" vivid among those who could neither read his books nor visit his tomb. He planned, therefore, several series of wood-cuts to record his glory. *Freydal* was an introduction to *Teuerdank*. It described in allegorical form the wooing of Mary of Burgundy by the Knight Freydal (Maximilian), who, after the fashion of chivalry, takes a trip through sixty-four courts to hold tournament and gain honor. The text is very short and occupies less than one-tenth of the space of the two hundred and fifty-five water-color illustrations made under the careful supervision of the Emperor as models for the wood-engraver. He fights three times at each court and honors its lady with a "mummerei," or masked dance. Of course, Maximilian took no such journey. The editor of the manuscript says that in the allegorical form Maximilian did not forget the historical content. This means only that when Maximilian dictated the short accounts of these games he seems to have had actual tournaments in mind, for usually the Emperor's adversary is named. Two-thirds of the tournaments come to no decisive results. In four-fifths of those that do lead to decisive results, Maximilian appears as victor.

Two similar series of wood-cuts were executed under Maximilian's direction. The one hundred and thirty-five plates of the *Triumphal Procession* show by symbolic figures his achievements as an athlete, sportsman and society leader; the provinces he ruled, his battles, treaties and marriages. The one hundred and ninety plates of the *Triumphal Arch*, when put together, form the largest wood-cut in existence, recording in symbolic form the glories of his family and his reign. And the genius of some of the men who held the pencil and burin for these thirteen hundred illustrations of his glory, has

thrown around the works of Maximilian a charm which is neither in his style nor in his ideas.

Popular tradition is sometimes very gentle to men. If there is anything in a ruler the people like, their memory adorns his figure as the evening light gives an unreal beauty. The courage, the vivacity, the tactful manners, the amiable personality of Maximilian made the Germans forget his faults. If he thought of Germany as anything but a background for the glory of the House of Hapsburg, it does not appear in what he did or wrote. Yet in tradition he is the typical Kaiser of the German folk. Foreign contemporaries all speak of him as lacking in ability, reckless in undertaking, slow in execution, overdaring in ideals, infirm of purpose. Yet the Germans took at its face value that most spurious of all literary coin, the praises of the humanists of the early sixteenth century. The student of his writings finds in every page traces of some fundamental qualities of the real man. He was intensely egoistic. Insatiable family pride possessed him. His dull and prosaic mind delighted in the exercise of a weak imagination that ignored instead of mastering facts. He found great pleasure in grandiose planning. He shrank from the monotonous work of execution. These characteristics did not prevent him from being a most successful manager of the family interests of the Hapsburgs. They did prevent him from becoming a great statesman. And these characteristics which determined his career are written large in his literary work.

PAUL VAN DYKE.